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PHILOSOPHIA

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak

Since the modern faith in Reason has died, the way is reopened for a thorough discussion of the relations between philosophy and theology. Being metaphilosophical as well as metatheological, such a discussion presupposes solid acquaintance with the concrete praxis of philosophy and theology as existentially rooted enterprises developed in the history of particular cultures and individual persons. This article defends the thesis that philosophy in the modern sense of the word never has been and cannot be autarkic because it cannot demonstrate the truth of the faith from which it draws its basic stance and orientation. If this faith is the faith of a Christian, it is impossible to draw a sharp distinction between the philosophical and the theological activities of such a philosopher. The stubborn attempt to restrict one's thought to autonomous philosophy wounds and paralyzes the thinking of Christians and destroys most of its relevance. The old synthetic conception of *philosophia*, upheld by Plato and the Stoics no less than by the Fathers of the Church, deserves a reevaluation. Despite the profound differences between unscientific premodernity and modern scientificity, that old conception is a more adequate description of the philosophical practice performed in real human lives.

The relations between philosophy and theology are no longer a hotly debated question among Christians, and yet they are constitutive for the framework in which their thinking develops. Their schools seem to have found a *modus vivendi* for the coexistence of both disciplines, but as far as I know, this coexistence is not supported by a generally accepted metatheory and fundamental "philosophico-theological" methodology. In this paper, I would like to challenge a powerful conception of the ways in which philosophy and theology are and should be related and to propose a different conception. I will here focus on these disciplines insofar as they are practiced by Christians, and, more precisely, by Catholics. The question is fundamental and consequently difficult, as are all questions regarding the transcendental conditions of basic practices and theories. A skillful solution presupposes not only competence in both philosophy and theology, and especially in their methodological and meta-theoretical parts; it also demands that Christians who practice these disciplines have a genuine, practical as well as emotional, experience of their faith and that they be

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aware of this experience while reflecting on their faith. It is, thus, neither enough to have studied all of Greek or modern philosophy, nor to be a professional theologian, unless the latter also participates in the ongoing philosophy. Since I myself have spent more time doing philosophy than theology, my approach will show a certain onesidedness. I hope, therefore, that professional theologians, from their perspective, will correct my errors and lack of sensitivity. Another wish is that philosophers and theologians join their skills to discuss the assumptions this article states only in a programmatic way.

I. The Question

The format of a paper does not permit me to begin with an accurate description of the situation of philosophical and theological studies in most Catholic universities. Neither can I even summarize some of the splendid and highly relevant studies on the historical genesis of this situation, from Henri De Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946) to Michael Buckley's *The Origins of Modern Atheism* (1987) and Louis Dupré's *Passage to Modernity* (1993). Instead of a diagnosis, I will limit myself to a few obvious reminders. Let me begin with the trivial observation that, like almost everywhere in academia, most Catholic universities have separated philosophical and theological studies by offering them in different departments. Most departments of philosophy do not tolerate theological interference, while many theology departments do not care for philosophy. If we had enough time to discuss the explicit and implicit beliefs and assumptions underlying this division, it would probably stir up critical amazement among the discussants and hopefully convince some of them that our question is an urgent one. Let me immediately pass instead to a more constructive observation, sketching some elements that we should take into account if we, as Christians, want to practice philosophy and theology according to their most rigorous demands without prejudice against the practice of a genuinely Christian life and without giving up our solidarity with the non-Christians of our society and world.

Philosophia

Since Pythagoras, who perhaps invented the word, *philosophia* has been practiced in many ways. A history of its meanings and modes occupies more than 300 dense columns in the excellent *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (vol. 7, c. 572-911). It reminds us of the fact that the typically modern definition of philosophy as a purely theoretical result of autonomous reason and common experience is only one of the varieties that have developed in Western culture. Between philosophy as, for example, Gregory of Nyssa saw it exemplified in the holy life of his sister Macrina, and the ideal of a universal and fundamental science, which has haunted modern thinkers, many possibilities of doing philosophy have been tried out. Many distinctions should be made when we talk about the definition and the method or the history of philosophy. I cannot even start doing this here, but I need to make at least one important distinction: the distinction between philosophy as a

serious and profound involvement on the way to truth, and philosophy in a less committed sense. Doing philosophy can be a game, like chess-playing; it can be done as a science, pursued out of curiosity, or performed as a job from 9 to 5. However, in the following considerations, I will focus on the kind of philosophy that is practiced as a profoundly important, even decisive element of a human life in search of wisdom. If we may affirm that human life as such desires wisdom, and that this desideratum involves insight, philosophy can be seen and practiced as the reflective and methodical stylization of the human quest for insight and wisdom. This is philosophy as practiced by the great philosophers from Parmenides to Wittgenstein and Heidegger. For them, philosophy was a way of life; some of them even praised it as the only possibility of leading a happy life. They didn't separate it as a purely theoretical discipline from the practical and emotional elements of human existence, but insisted on their unity. However, it is characteristic of the Greco-European tradition that it has stressed the role of thinking and *theoria* in the pursuit of happiness.

As a quest for insight on the way to wisdom, philosophy was more radical than any science, *epistēmē*, or mere theory; it emerged from the most radical desire (*erōs, desiderium*) of human existence and remained rooted in what some have called the "heart." As a search for wisdom, philosophy was careful not to cut its conceptuality off from the experiences of humanly growing lives. Reason and rationality were celebrated and refined, but neither isolated nor seen as self-sufficient principles for the discovery of truth. Even Hegel demanded that his students bring a faith to his lectures: "faith in reason" (*Glaube an die Vernunft*) was necessary to follow the master in his showing how reason - and reason alone - could bring to light the truth and meaning of all things.[1]

I cannot fully justify here the thesis I am advancing, namely that every seriously committed philosophy necessarily involves a basic faith, but I hope that my readers already agree with me on this, or at least consider it plausible. Nobody can philosophize without some unproven but spontaneous or postulated conviction which has the character of trust. A basic moment of such a conviction is the trust that reality, human existence, the universe and being as such cannot be utterly senseless; they must have (a) meaning (or, at least, under certain conditions they will have meaning). "*Omne esse est intelligible*" is one of the expressions for this faith; "*ens et bonum convertuntur*" is another.

The faith of a philosopher does not stop at this basic trust, however. As soon as it expresses itself in a concrete way of life and thought, it takes a form in which cultural, historical, and personal moments are recognizable. A careful study of any great philosophy can discover pre-rational elements that have coalesced into a typical stance and orientation. The rationality of modern philosophy was not autarkic enough to shape by its own force alone the basic movement and discoveries of a human life. Reason comes too late for this, although its critical reflections play a role (but only one) in the (re)direction and the (re)adjustment of a philosopher's existence. A human life has taken its basic form before it discovers the possibilities of what we now, in modern contexts, call "philosophy."

The faith of a philosopher realizes itself in a basic mode of experiencing,

sensing, accepting and approaching life and the world. This mode is expressed in a certain mood, a specific way of being attuned (in bitterness, resignation, melancholy, enjoyment, gratitude. . .), of welcoming (or excluding) phenomena, and of participating in the history of human praxis.

Philosophy as Participation in a History

Here I must insert another analysis, though again too briefly: an analysis of the historical aspect of all philosophical activity.

If philosophy is an activity which cannot be practiced unless it has been learned, participation in philosophical discussions presupposes that I have been initiated and have acquired at least some experience in it. When I philosophize, I am already set in my ways, although I can still change partially or even undergo some kind of conversion. Other philosophers must have introduced me to and trained me in an activity that has been going on before I became a student, even before I or we or America were born. I was introduced into philosophy not by *Logos*, *Reason*, or *Empeiria*, but by professors so and so and by the texts they recommended as instructive, worthwhile or exemplary. There is no way to begin autonomously; as a student, I cannot avoid accepting the authority of certain teachers and texts and taking for granted - at least provisionally - that what they do is philosophy. Later, I might discover that *that* was only a particular style within a varied field, that there are other good or better teachers who recommend different texts and argue in a different vein, and that modern philosophy is only a fragment from a history of philosophical activity that stretches over a period more than six times longer than the period from Hobbes and Descartes to our days. By that point, however, it is too late for starting all over again. In the meantime, I have been formed in a specific style of philosophizing on the basis of particular assumptions that were never proven but have been generally accepted for some time. In discovering the relativity of the philosophical position to which I have adjusted, I can start working on a critical reform or conversion of that position, but if it is true that reason is not autarkic, the new position which I will adopt will again be a particular one, and - if my thinking has some originality - an individual one.

II. Christians Who Philosophize

Faith

After these metaphilosophical preliminaries, we can direct our attention to the distinctive character of thinking as practiced by Christians who are also philosophers. Let us suppose that some Christian has been introduced into philosophy by getting acquainted with analytic and/or continental philosophy as they are practiced in most American universities. Most courses such a person has taken did not touch on religious questions. Probably the impression was given that, in philosophy, everybody could find out the same truths on every topic. Even if the program contained some philosophy of religion, it will probably not have included theological explanations of Christian faith. Yet a Christian cannot do without theology, for, as a

Christian, you are committed to a community of faith with a life and thought of its own. You have been initiated and confirmed in the faith, the beliefs, the rituals and the ethos of this community, and for most Christians, this has happened long before they studied philosophy. Your faith neither consists in the affirmation of propositions, and even less in a theory; fundamentally, it is trust in God as revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This trust orients and mobilizes your entire existence; it permeates all your possibilities and provides your participation in human history with its ultimate meaning. Your faith has a memory and expects an *eschaton*; this makes you feel grateful for God's work of creation and redemption, and it confirms your hope. It inspires you with love and compassion, natural responses to God's spirit of grace. Faith is neither a *doxa about* God, nor a superscience; it is neither Kant's *Fürwahrhalten*, nor Hume's belief. It does not compete with any philosophy, *if* philosophy is no more than theory. *Pistis*, *fides*, is the most radical and total confidence that supports all behavior, feeling and thought of a Christian. It constitutes the basic stance and dynamism of a Christian life and decides about its final meaning. It thus determines the meaning of all behavior and thinking in which Christians express their concerns. This does not mean that we can deduce from faith what the full content and method of behavior, ethos, politics, art, science, and philosophy in our time should be, but it does involve an orientation, a certain style, a certain "music."

Culture

Besides being members of a religious community, Christians are children of a particular epoch and *culture*. As such, we spontaneously share many tastes, conceptions and uses with non-Christians. Some of the prevailing assumptions might be unChristian or anti-Christian; church authorities or saints might warn us that we should not share these assumptions, but some of the existing practices and institutions are so powerful that we cannot avoid participating in them. The capitalistic organization of the world economy is an example. Church leaders may condemn this system, but if we want to survive, we cannot stop sharing its functioning. We seem to be in a bind, as St. Paul was in a bind when he sent Philemon's slave back to his master. Another example is the modern institutionalization of massive violence and the fierce nationalism which again and again proves stronger than solidarity with fellow humans and fellow Christians.

These examples might convince us that Christians not only participate in the noble and beautiful aspects of civilization, but just as much in the "sins of the world." A similar remark can be made vis-à-vis the theoretical elements of the culture. It is not always clear to what extent the beliefs of an epoch spontaneously assimilated by Christians are compatible with their faith or form a stumbling block for their endeavor to understand who and how they are.

The Philosophy of Christians

Christians who practice philosophy are committed to an historical

process in which universities, journals, books, libraries, conferences, courses and standard schedules play key roles. Educated in selected styles and schools with a profound reverence for particular authorities and traditions, we participate in discussions on privileged topics according to certain fashions; we prefer certain authors and texts and neglect or despise others, but we continue to talk about "philosophy" and "*the* history of philosophy" as if we knew them in their entirety. In any case, we exercise this activity by participating in "what is going on in philosophy." Even if we are very original, we continue a history that has been developing for 2,600 years, becoming ourselves links in a complicated network of chains.

As philosophers, we began by sharing unproven beliefs and explicit or hidden assumptions; much of the time thereafter was spent in trying to find out to what extent those assumptions are justifiable, but we have not yet arrived at a complete proof for all of them. The awareness about this leads us to the well-known problem of the "beginning," the "*archē*," the *principia*, and the "ground" of philosophy. The main current of modern philosophy (from Hobbes and Descartes to Hegel) has been dominated by the belief that, through common experience and universal reason, it is possible to establish an unshakable foundation on which the system of truth can be built. This project has failed and led to a situation of relativism and skepticism on the one side, whereas, on the other side, there is a growing conviction that the empirical and rational moments of philosophy are rooted in deeper levels of existence with a stringency of their own. Some have pointed towards a "logic of the heart," others to our prepredicative familiarity with things as a form of understanding inherent to the practice of human life itself. Above I have identified every philosopher's basic faith as the soil and source of his thinking. Spinoza's or Kant's philosophies, no less than medieval or Greek philosophies, were rooted in and inspired by pre-philosophical commitments. Without any faith, no philosopher is genuine, if philosophy is more serious than a scientific specialty at juggling hypotheses according to formal skills.

Theology

Christians are established on a rock: Jesus Christ. The expression of their faith is heavily dependent on the cultural history in which they participate, however. It is thus a combination of that faith and the transitory elements of a specific culture.

In a civilization where philosophical reflection plays an important role, the concrete forms in which Christian faith is formulated contain philosophical elements. The ensemble of its expressions, insofar as they reflect this faith in the language of conceptuality, constitutes Christian theology.

A Christian who has become a philosopher shares a world of arguments with other philosophers, Christian as well as non-Christian. As a philosopher, one must be at home in the ongoing ways of argumentation, be an expert in the skills that are required or in vogue, have experiences similar to those of others, and look at things from comparable perspectives. At the same time, a Christian is at home in a community of faith which does not belong to any specific period of time, culture, language, race or country.

This community is not an abstraction, however; on the contrary, it is the most fundamental and encompassing, and thus the most concrete, community of all. Grace, faith, hope and gratitude pervade the entire life of Christians from top to bottom and vice-versa, uniting them in one *communio*, even if their authenticity and innocence is hampered or damaged by the difficulties of human life.

Our question can now be reformulated in the following terms: How can Christians, in their lives and thoughts, combine membership in an historical community of faith and salvation (which at the same time transcends all epochs *and* is culturally concrete) with a real participation in the republic of philosophy, where they practice solidarity with colleagues who are supported by other faiths?

If philosophy were no more than mastery in skills and tools, there would be no problem. Purely formal elements of philosophy (if these exist) can be shared by everybody, like those of mathematics or chemistry. Their universality is paid for by a very reduced relevance with regard to the decisive questions of human existence. A serious or involved philosopher is engaged in orientations and wagers that cannot be justified by formal techniques alone. Once involved, one is already on a specific way - guided by a basic trust that it will lead to more truth.

Why is it that many Christians who are involved in philosophy try to maintain a strict separation between their philosophical work and their reflection on the Christian meaning of the lives they live in their Christian community? Do they want to convince their non-Christian colleagues that their method and findings are as authentically philosophical (rational, empirically justified, universally valid, etc.) as those of agnostic, atheist, or skeptical thinkers? Is there anything in the philosophy they share with the latter that makes a wholehearted adherence to the Christian community difficult? Do they suffer from a conflict between two loyalties? This would be the case if the content, the orientation, the approach, or the spirit of the philosophical practice in which they engage were hostile to the spirit of Christianity. But how would such be possible since both faith and philosophy are committed to the quest for truth?

To acquire some clarity in these questions, a Christian cannot rely on philosophy alone. As philosophers, we must, of course, research the sources to which we owe our perspectives and convictions, including the philosophical faith which is expressed in our particular and individual modes of philosophical and Christian involvement. But what and how we are insofar as we are Christians is not revealed by reflection alone; faith itself gives a more adequate interpretation of this fact; and faith is a gift of the Spirit, a grace. Christians cannot ignore the way in which their own faith illuminates their experiences of world and history; neither can they simply neglect the reflecting self-interpretation of the religious community to which they belong. This statement does not entail that a Christian should deny the difference between faith itself and its epochal expressions in typically Greco-European forms of reflexivity; it does mean, however, that we, as philosophizing Christians, cannot refrain from engaging in theological reflection on the relevance of Christian faith for our commitment to philosophy. The question of the relations between philosophy and faith involves thus two

series of questions:

a) questions concerning the relations between the faiths that underlie actually existing forms of philosophy on the one hand and Christian faith on the other;
b) questions about the relations between the typically philosophical mode of explanation and the theological approach.

Our question appears to involve us in a *theological* question, at least to some extent.

In fact, every Christian who is not utterly naive has been initiated in some form of theology. Catechisms, for example, are full of popularized theology. They also contain philosophical elements, however, which most often pertain to a recent or less recent past. Thus, when I was six years old, I learned that the ultimate meaning of human life lies in union with God, while at the same time, I was initiated into a Platonizing theory about the separability of our eternal soul and a mortal body.

The "Spirit" of a Philosophy

If philosophy were only a technique, having its own fixed and subordinate place and function within the economy of human life, there would not be any reason to notice the differences between Christian and other philosophers. If, however, "philosophy" is the name of a way of life, a profoundly committed involvement in an historical quest for wisdom, it cannot be separated from the personal and communal faith to which it owes its motivation. A Christian who enters the realm of philosophy by getting acquainted with Descartes, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and so on is confronted with worlds of thought that express particular modes of faith. If we take "experience" in its widest sense, as the global and pre-theoretical way in which the unfolding of a human life in space and time is experienced, we can here also use the word "experience" to point at the personal history of events and experiments from which philosophical thought emerges. The experience of a life shows a certain spirit: the spirit in which it is accepted and risked, oriented and "projected," undergone and heeded. Every philosophy, for example Spinoza's *Ethics*, can be interpreted as the conceptual translation of an underlying experience. This makes it possible to ask what kind of spirit is evident in such a translation and to what extent it expresses the experience of the individual or collective life in which it is rooted. The answer to these questions cannot be found outside a careful reconstruction of singular oeuvres in their own contexts,[2] and the results depend on the varieties of faith, experience, and reconstructive skills of the interpreters. There will thus be ample occasion for debates.

To further our inquiry, we must investigate whether Christian faith provides us with the means that permit us to diagnose the neutral, Christian, un-Christian, or anti-Christian character of the various theories that form the actual scene of contemporary and former philosophy. This question must be answered if we want to know whether concrete solidarity with all kinds of non-Christian philosophers is compatible with membership in the

Christian community. The situation from which this question arises is in many respects similar to the situation in which the intellectuals of early Christianity found themselves. They too were confronted with a variety of non-Christian philosophers stemming from other spirits than that of Jesus Christ.

Integration

When Origen, for example, studied in Alexandria, or when Basil and the two Gregories studied in Athens, or when Saint Augustine was reading the Platonists, they saw themselves tempted and challenged by philosophies whose character they admired, although they recognized their pagan character. Something had to be changed in those philosophies in order to integrate them into their own thought and that of their Christian communities. Such changes could not be superficial because paganism, and, more concretely, Hellenistic philosophy, was a way of life, committed to specific practices and assumptions fed by a specific faith. The philosophies of the pagans could not be cut off from the experience in which they were at home. Integration into a radically different Christian frame demanded more originality than assimilation or competition according to accepted rules and uses; it demanded a *radical* transformation. Another spirit had to take possession of the elements gathered by the non-Christian inspiration in the works that were offered as the highlights of civilization. Instead of rejecting the pagan philosophers wholesale, the early thinkers of early Christianity demonstrated the originality of their spirit by changing parts of those philosophies into seeds (*logoi spermatikoi*) and elements (*stoicheia*) of new ensembles showing a radically different inspiration. Not assimilation, but the combination of critical confrontation and inspired transformation generated a new *philosophia*, whose Christian character could not be denied. The refusal to betray the source of their Christian existence made them creative in the constructive destruction of non-Christian philosophies. Insofar as the thinkers of Christianity were successful, their appropriation of pagan thoughts makes it impossible to separate in their work some parts that would be called "philosophical" in the modern sense of the word from other, theological and typically Christian parts. The Christianization of thinking is neither a marginal business, nor a "super-added" level on top of an autarkic human nature. Grace transforms all the elements of life and thought. And this statement is not an abstract and speculative thesis without empirical basis; the Christian experience of life as a whole and in detail is radically different from an unredeemed existence. I do not want to exclude that certain works of the Fathers or the medieval Magistri contain unassimilated or badly integrated, and in this sense pagan elements, but the task was and is clear and sound. Christians cannot leave the secular elements of the actual culture untouched by their faith; neither can they refrain from participating in that culture by withdrawing into a ghetto. If their faith is alive, it inevitably transforms the elements of the existing culture, including its philosophy, into a body of its own. The assumption of culture is an ongoing Incarnation, and the Christianization of philosophy is an important part of it.

Modern Philosophy

Students of our time are confronted with problems similar to those of the early Fathers of the Church. What is the spirit of modern and postmodern philosophy? Did their great figures express a Christian inspiration in philosophy? In discussing the works of Descartes, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel, I for my part would defend the thesis that their philosophies, including their appeal to Christian faith, in fact have not been faithful to it, but it would be more effective to show that the basic faith on which the whole enterprise of modern philosophy rests is not compatible with the faith of a Christian.

To be brief, I propose to characterize the source or principle of modern philosophy - i.e., the philosophy that still dominates our institutions and manners - as a faith that combines the following convictions:

1. Reason, as interpreted in the modern logic and methodology of rationality, is the supreme and sovereign judge of reflective speech or writing.
2. Reason needs experience.
3. The experience that counts in the search for truth is a kind of experience that is or can be had by all people who have the normal use of the human senses, especially the eyes. Paradigmatic for this kind of experience are indubitable sensations and scientific observation.

One basic element of the concrete quest for truth is emphatically silenced in these principles: the element I have called *faith*, or trust. Modern philosophy ignores the decisive role of its own faith in reason, in science, and in certain criteria for evidence and trustworthy experience. It also denies the relevance of good taste, virtue, religion, prayer, and dialogue for thinking and discovering the truth. Very different from the medieval and patristic *doctores*, but also from Plato and other Greek lovers of *sophia*, modern philosophy does not have any interest in the religious, moral, and aesthetic spirituality from which a well- or badly-oriented, an enthusiastic, moody, lazy, overheated, deathly boring or hopeful thinking emerges. As is evident for everybody who is concerned about emotional economy, such a neglect has dramatic consequences for the course of a human life. If the practice of philosophy is a way of life, it cannot ignore the sources from which it in fact draws its energy, its desires and hopes and interests, its perseverance in the search and so on. Philosophical "research" - the word is revealing - has cut itself off from spirituality and faith, thus repressing what makes it so enjoyable, and might make it an integral part of happiness. Deathly boredom and disgust (*acedia*) is the inevitable result.

Experience

That philosophy cannot be autarkic is already clear from its dependence on *experience*, but it has tried to narrow the domain of experience to such a small and almost rational (i.e., logically conquerable) part of its material that it still could cherish its illusions of rational mastery. Fortunately, the phe-

nomenological movement has shown us, for more than a hundred years, that human experience encompasses a much wider field of trustworthy and interesting experiences, but some schools continue to believe that we should restrict ourselves to indubitable impressions. They prefer not to consider the conditions of those more interesting experiences without which it is impossible to talk about genuine beauty, moral virtues, authenticity, love, phenomenality, being, etc. Their "democratic" ideal (often confused with universal validity) condemns them to neglecting or repressing all differences in receptivity, taste, openmindedness, refinement and civilization; the result is the utter triviality of the matter on which they discourse.

The phenomenological revaluation of the entire range of authentic experiences reconnects us with a 3,000-year-old tradition which was disrupted by the methodical restrictions of the modern sciences. These made such an impression on the leading philosophers that they left all questions of existential wisdom to the experience of less scholarly persons. The historical split between philosophers who tried to be as scientific as the geometers and physicists of their time, and those who continued to search for wisdom outside the world of philosophy, has caused a long tragedy: for 400 years wisdom withdrew from thought because thinking withdrew from spirituality.

Autonomy of reason?

The attempt at rational *autonomy* has been a disaster for our culture. Its failure is now almost everywhere recognized: we are not able to prove anything substantial without fundamental assumptions and experiences that we accept as plausible or credible, although they cannot be fully justified. We are supported by a host of beliefs, but we do not yet agree on the "logic" of these beliefs. The domain where "autonomous" reason has celebrated some triumphs is the domain of purely formal disciplines, especially modern logic. Since all of these disciplines presuppose but do not prove anything about the reality and the meaning of our existence in the world, they are abstract and hypothetical. As soon as we talk about some content, endless doubts about every possible description or analysis come up, doubts which can only be overcome by sticking to some belief. This situation easily leads to skepticism or agnosticism, and philosophy is tempted to see itself as a game or a particularly desperate way of "living dangerously." Skepticism is a child of rationalism, however. It stems from expectations that were too high and therefore *must* be disappointed.

The discovery that the dream of autonomous Reason cannot be realized can also be the initiation to a further discovery: we should neither despair of reason and rationality, nor flee into the subjectivism of arbitrary preferences and beliefs; instead, we should find out where and how exactly reason's marvelous possibilities fit into the economy of human life. This discovery presupposes the recognition that philosophy, in the modern sense of the word, is not a sovereignly independent tribunal, but an element amidst other elements needed for the discovery of important truth. Philosophizing is only one, and not the supreme, activity among the activities and possibilities through which humans can approach meaning and insight. For Christians, participation in the tradition of modern and postmodern philos-

ophy with her own authorities and canonical texts is only possible in the following ways:

a) either we share with non-Christians the discussions of an ongoing history in which the participants methodically ignore all references to Christian faith *and* to any other kind of faith (from the preceding consideration, it is clear that I see this as an abstract, hypothetical, and provisional way of thinking); or
b) we participate in the ongoing discussions, using at each occasion the appropriate rational and empirical skills, but without refraining from reflection on the meaning and the structure of our commitment to the Christian faith.

Philosophia

I would like to conclude this paper with a summary sketch of the Christian *philosophia* that, by a creative retrieval of the premodern tradition, should find its place among the respectable and respected ways of doing philosophy. To prevent misunderstandings, I want to state clearly that I am pleading neither for any form of neo-ism, nor for other kinds of conservative or reactionary return to epochs of the past. Repetition and archaeological nostalgia are signs of death; historical reconstructions, necessary and illuminating as they are, cannot solve by themselves the question of how we can achieve tasks similar to, but not identical with, those of Origenes, Augustine, Anselm, Bonaventure, and Nicolas of Cusa.

In order to be radically reflective, the philosophy of Christians must develop as an integral part of a discipline that integrates theology and philosophy into one whole: a "philo-theo-logy" that has agreed to be challenged by non-Christian philosophers. Such a challenge obliges advocates of this unified theory to be as competent in philosophy as those non-Christians who are committed to a godless, agnostic, relativistic, skeptical, or dogmatically anti-Christian faith. In philosophizing, Christians will necessarily be aware of the unbreakable connections that weave the philosophical elements of their reflection into the web of their theological universe, while theologians will carefully scrutinize the philosophical elements of their own opinions, interpretations and theories. Since the evolution of the modern sciences confronts us with an overwhelming mass of texts and information, nobody is able to imitate the encyclopedic knowledge of geniuses like Origenes, Thomas, or Cusanus; as mastery in both philosophy and theology demands at least a double doctorate, it is inevitable that most scholars will focus on partial approaches to certain topics. However, it is necessary that the partiality of our investigations be practiced as an integral moment of the collective contemplation to which the Christian community is devoted. In talking of a "collective" contemplation, I do not want to suggest that we should prepare one overall system in which all individual attempts at understanding Christian faith would nicely fit as parts of one whole. The collectivity of thinking has other structures and rules than the systematic coherence of a dogmatic monologue. As a community of faith, the *koinōnia* of Christian life permits *and demands* a plurality of intellectual

unfoldings which cannot be levelled to the unity of one theory or methodology. But here we touch upon the problem of a non-relativistic pluralism which demands a separate analysis.

Solidarity with other Christians within one historical community cannot be separated from solidarity with all non-Christians, even if their thought is oriented by another faith. On this worldwide level, the communication can remain philosophical, but philosophy itself will have to be more explicit than before about the radical differences between the positions from which individuals and particular communities receive, perceive, experience, observe, understand, and methodically approach the historical world of human existence. Christians should no longer be nervous or ashamed about their theocentric, christocentric and pneumatic inspiration. Their intellectual activity should not feign to be separated from its theological, christological and pneumatological setting; on the contrary, the conversation with individuals and communities that draw their inspiration from other commitments demands that they manifest the breadth of mind and the radicality of questioning to which the best of their Christian and philosophical traditions have enabled them. If grace is the source and purpose of creation, it can only fortify and illuminate our possibilities of understanding. Perhaps *philosophia* will even lead us again to some sort of *theōsis* through contemplation.

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NOTES

1. Cf. the following emphasized passage of the discourse with which Hegel began lecturing at the Universtiy of Heidelberg on October 28, 1816: *"To begin with, I may not appeal to anything else than that, first of all, you come only with trust in science and trust in yourselves. The courage to truth, faith in the power of spirit, is the first condition of philosophy"* (*Gesammelte Werke*, Hamburg: Meiner, vol. 18, p. 6). Almost the same sentences are pronounced in Hegel's inaugural lecture at the University of Berlin on October 22, 1818: "To begin with, I may not appeal to anything else than that you come with trust in *science, faith in reason, trust and faith in yourselves. The courage to truth, faith in the power of spirit,* is the first condition of *philosophical study*" (p. 18).

2. Cf. Adriaan T. Peperzak, *System and History in Philosophy*. Albany: SUNY, 1986, pp. 47-60.